Barker, Lewellys F [Johns Hopkins University] March 1918

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Baltimore, March 7, 1918

Sir Robert Falconer,

Toronto, Canada.

My dear Sir Robert:

The man you write about is known here as a brilliant investigator with youth on his side. The main criticism I have heard is that he may not be sufficiently self critical but youth may explain this.

I have talked with several of our men about the ethics of patenting a substance discovered by a chemist. Most feel that a chemist has the right to patent if he desires to do so. They also feel that giving the rewards from the patent to a university or to a research institution is a distinctly generous thing to do.

I think the feeling against patenting has grown out of the relationship of the medical profession to patent medicines and so-called proprietary medicines. In the medical profession it is ethical for a discoverer of anything to put his discovery immediately at the disposal of all his professional brethren.

Discoveries in physics and chemistry are on a somewhat different footing. I remember that some time ago Kendall of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester offered to patent his thyroid preparations and the Mayos agreed to give all the income from the patent to the College of Surgeons provided they would accept it. I am told that there are other similar instances of patenting chemical substances.

If I hear of anything further that I think will be of help to you I shall write you. If there are any specific questions you would like to ask please write me.

Yours faithfully,

Lelellys F. Parker

Barker, Lewellys F

Johns Hopkins University

March 1918

March 11th, 1918.

Dr. L. F. Parker,

Johns Hopkins University,

Baltimore, Md.

Dear Dr. Parker:

Your kind letter has just reached me and I am very much indebted to you for it. It is exactly the kind of letter we wanted. We are not making a choice between Robertson and Macleod. Macleod is coming to us as Professor of Physiology. He has accepted the position. What we are in doubt about is whether we should offer the Biochemical chair to Robertson. On the whole the evidence seems to run very strongly in his favour, and your statement will be quite a help to us.

With kind regards to Mrs. Parker and yourself,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.